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THE CONFLICT OF POLITICAL INTERESTS IN THE MAKING AND ENFORCEMENT OF GERMAN DISARMAMENT TERMS, 1918-1935

Description

An analysis of the conflicting political views and interests which influenced Allied statesmanship in the shaping of German disarmament terms during the peace negotiations of 1918-1919 and subsequently contributed to Germany's rearmament.

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THE CONFLICT OF POLITICAL INTERESTS IN THE MAKING AND ENFORCEMENT OF GERMAN DISARMAMENT TERMS, 1918-1935

Summary

The divergence of political views and interests existing among the major Allied and Associated Powers was an important factor in the shaping of armistice and peace terms in 1918-1919. It further contributed to the creation of a post-war international atmosphere which permitted Germany to evade a rigid enforcement of disarmament and, ultimately, to rearm through a unilateral denunciation of the pertinent clauses of the Versailles Treaty.

The clash of political interests was first revealed in the discussion of armistice terms, which tended to look beyond stipulations for ensuring the military supremacy of the Allies after the cessation of hostilities to the final conditions of peace. France, emphasizing control of the Rhineland rather than military disarmament as the basis of security, proposed armistice terms which provided for the occupation of this area. In order to compel the Allies to maintain sufficient military strength on the Continent to impose severe conditions of peace on Germany, the French program for the armistice allowed the German armies to withdraw intact to the east bank of the Rhine. Great Britain, which sought to ensure the destruction of German sea power, proposed armistice terms calling for the surrender of the Grand Fleet. This measure was opposed by the French, not so much because of their fear that it might lead to German rejection of the armistice terms as because they believed it would lead to the premature demobilization of Britain's war-time navy. The military representatives of the United States, desiring to create an atmosphere in which Germany would accept a rational plan of post-war disarmament as a prelude to a general world program, insisted on the complete demobilization of German military strength as a condition of the Armistice. Japan, which displayed no interest in purely European matters,

and Italy, which was interested primarily in Austrian armistice terms, took little part in the discussions. The United States and Great Britain finally acquiesced in the French program for the military terms of the Armistice, while France, in turn, agreed to a modified form of the British proposals for the naval terms. As amended, these called for internment rather than outright surrender of the German fleet.

At the Paris Peace Conference, the clash of political views on the military clauses of the final peace settlement centered around four points: (1) the size and form of the post-war German army, (2) the French attempt to secure the occupation of the more important industrial areas on the east bank of the Rhine as a guarantee of qualitative disarmament, (3) the disposition of the German fleet, and (4) the time limits on the period of active control over German disarmament to be exercised by the various Inter-Allied Commissions.

France, believing that a conscript army was less effective than a professional army, advocated a German army of 200,000 men raised by conscription for a one-year term of service. This proposal was rejected by the United States and England, which were opposed to the principle of conscription but favorable to a moderate-sized German army because of their fears of the spread of Bolshevism. France, compelled to accept the idea of a German professional army, succeeded, however, in reducing its size to 100,000 men.

The French attempt to secure Allied occupation of German industrial areas on the east bank of the Rhine was also vetoed by the United States and England on the ground that it would necessitate the commitment of additional troops and perhaps impede the economic recovery of Germany.

England, interested in the destruction of German naval power but opposed to strengthening the naval power of the Continental states, joined the United States, which had similar views as regards Japan, in opposing French, Italian, and Japanese attempts to secure the division of the German navy for incorporation into their own fleets. This issue was settled, however, by the German action at Scapa Flow.

Opinions on the duration of active military control were quite diverse. Generally, however, the United States and England favored a

relatively short term in opposition to the French demand for permanent control. A definitive decision on this problem was avoided by limiting the active control of the Inter-Allied Commissions to the period established for the actual carrying out of the disarmament clauses by Germany. The question of further controls was left to the Council of the League of Nations.

In the period 1920-1927, when the Inter-Allied Commissions were actively engaged in the task of securing compliance with the military clauses of the Versailles Treaty, Allied divergences continued to exist and gave encouragement to German reluctance to carry out the disarmament terms. France, desiring the maintenance of a weak Germany and still nursing her ambitions for control of the Rhineland, utilized every opportunity offered by the German failure to comply with the terms of Versailles to demand the application of sanctions, usually in the form of the extension of Allied occupation in the Rhineland. Great Britain pursued a vacillating and often contradictory policy. Continuing fear of the expansion of Bolshevism, and the desire to encourage the German economic recovery for British trade purposes, dictated a policy of leniency toward Germany on the one hand, while on the other, dependence on French military support in the Near East and other areas necessitated consideration for the French point of view on German disarmament. Britain therefore gave diplomatic support to French demands for German compliance with the military terms, but vigorously opposed the use of sanctions in treaty violations and refused to join France in 1920 and 1923 when the latter, with Belgium, occupied various points on the east bank of the Rhine. The United States reverted to a policy of isolationism following the Senate rejection of the Versailles Treaty, emerging only to encourage general plans for world disarmament and to give unofficial support to the British point of view in the conduct of German disarmament. Italy, disappointed over the failure to satisfy the entirety of her territorial ambitions at Paris and, consequently, particularly hostile to France, generally shared the British attitude on the application of sanctions against Germany for disarmament violations. This period of conflict among the major Allied powers came to an end with the Ruhr fiasco in 1924, the Locarno

pacts of the following year which brought Germany into the League as a recognized "great power," and the subsequent withdrawal of the Inter-Allied Military Commission from Germany.

As a permanent member of the Council of the League of Nations, Germany, after 1927, took advantage of the international conferences preparatory to the Geneva Disarmament Conference of 1932 to demand equality of status in the matter of armaments. After 1929, the German government was aided in its demands by the return of a modified balance of power in which Russia, Italy, and Germany combined on armaments questions to oppose France and her satellites. Communist Russia, long excluded from the international comity of nations, had been courting Germany since Rappallo, while Italy, under the leadership of Mussolini, had by this time become definitely "revisionist" and openly advocated equality of status for Germany. Great Britain, which held the balance between the two groups of states, adopted a policy of combining support to France on the immediate necessity of maintaining the disarmament clauses of the Treaty with attempts to find a way of giving satisfaction to the German demands. France remained adamant, however, and refused to countenance any revision of the Versailles military clauses until an iron-clad guarantee of French security was forthcoming.

As a result of the failure of the Geneva Disarmament Conference to grant equality of status, Germany withdrew and announced her decision to rearm. Great Britain, which desired to protect her naval position, gave official recognition to this unilateral action by signing a naval treaty with Germany, sanctioning a limited revival of the latter's sea power.

THE CONFLICT OF POLITICAL INTERESTS IN THE MAKING AND ENFORCEMENT OF GERMAN DISARMAMENT TERMS, 1918-1935

I. INTRODUCTION

At the present time the chiefs of the American, British and Russian Governments appear to be in accord on the principle of the complete disarmament of Germany as a necessary condition of the future peace. The unanimous acceptance of this principle by the Allied statement indicates a determination to avoid the errors of limited disarmament which were applied to defeated Germany in 1918-1919. There remains, however, the much more difficult task of defining the actual terms of complete disarmament and the conditions under which these terms are to be maintained in the post-war period. As a further safeguard against a repetition of the mistakes of the past, therefore, it is instructive to analyze the various factors which contributed to the failure of the first experiment in German disarmament following World War I. Most important, perhaps, among these factors was the divergence of political views and interests which existed among the then victorious nations. Expressed, first of all, in the shaping of the armistice and final terms of peace, this divergence was largely instrumental in permitting Germany to evade the rigid enforcement of even limited disarmament and, ultimately, to rearm through the unilateral denunciation of the pertinent clauses of the Versailles Treaty.

The analysis of this political factor as it evolved from the Armistice of 1918 to the Anglo-German Naval Convention of 1935 forms the basis of this study. No attempt is made to discuss the more technical difficulties in the shaping and enforcement of the disarmament terms.[1] As far as possible, the study is restricted to the purely political conflict which centered around the three essential bases of the military and naval settlement: (1) quantitative disarmament, which was applied to the form and size of the German military machine (2) qualitative disarmament,

1. A more technical discussion of the German disarmament problemsis found in R&A Report No. 2779,"Lessons to be Derived from the Disarmament of Germany After World War I."

which concerned the various types of armaments to be allowed, and (3) territorial disarmament, which related to coastal and frontier fortifications and to demilitarized zones. The occupation of the Rhineland, which constituted a guarantee of the fulfillment of the peace terms rather than a measure of disarmament, is touched upon only as it affected the attitude of the victorious powers on the question of German armaments.

With the exception of Japan, which maintained her traditional policy of non-interest in European affairs, France alone of the major victorious powers pursued a consistent policy throughout the period 1918-1935. Convinced that security depended on the maintenance of a militarily weak Germany, France, after failing to secure her Rhineland program, took the lead in formulating disarmament terms that seriously restricted the size and power of the German army and, during the post-war period, vigorously opposed any attempt to revise the military clauses of the peace settlement to Germany's advantage. England's first concern was the destruction of German sea power but, once having achieved this objective, Britain pursued a vacillating policy with regard to military disarmament. On the one hand, fear of the spread of Bolshevism and the desire to encourage the economic recovery of Germany dictated a policy favoring the relaxation of the disarmament clauses; on the other, the necessity of maintaining cordial relations with France compelled consideration of the French viewpoint. The United States, after having espoused a program for the moderate reduction of German armaments, reverted to a policy of isolationism following 1919 and emerged only occasionally in attempts to secure the acceptance of world disarmament plans which implied recognition of the German demand for equality of status. Italy, which generally supported the French thesis at Paris, later became a revisionist state because of disappointment over certain territorial clauses of the peace settlement and, after 1929, openly asserted the right of Germany to rearm.

II. THE ARMISTICE TERMS AND THE PEACE SETTLEMENT

A. The Armistice Terms

1. Basic Factors in the Shaping of the Military Terms of Disarmament:

The military and naval clauses of the Armistice terms presented to the

Germans on 11 November 1918 reflected three basic factors which influenced their formulation: (1) the haste with which Allied statesmen had drawn up the conditions for the cessation of hostilities; (2) uncertainty as to the ability of the enemy to continue the war; and (3) the extension of the Armistice terms beyond considerations of the requirements for the attainment of military superiority over the enemy to approximations of the final conditions of peace. Prior to October 1918, the course of the war had never been so favorable as to impress the Allied and Associated Powers with the necessity for immediate formulation of the military and naval conditions of peace with Germany. Although previous, but by no means unanimous, agreements had been made among the various Allied powers concerning certain territorial phases of the future peace, almost the only official pronouncement on disarmament was that contained in the Fourteen Points, which called for a general reduction in national armaments "to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety" (Point 4). Thus, when the Germans unexpectedly requested conditions for the cessation of hostilities in October 1918, the Allies had no more concrete proposal to put forward as the basis for an armistice than this vague and generalized formula, which by inference was applicable to victor and vanquished alike, and which had, therefore, unfortunate implications for the future success of any program of German disarmament. The lack of preparation by Allied statesmen is most strikingly revealed, perhaps, in the draft of armistice terms which was drawn up by the British, French and Italian ministers on 6 October 1918 and, without reference to any disarmament measures, stipulated only that the Germans should evacuate France, Belgium, and Luxembourg; withdraw to the right bank of the Rhine; and cease submarine warfare.[1]

Uncertainty as to the ability of the German army to continue the war combined with the war weariness of the French, British and Italians to influence the military and naval clauses of the Armistice. Allied headquarters were entirely ignorant of the confusion which reigned in the

1. Jordan, W.M. Great Britain, France, and the German Problem, 1918-1939, London, 1943, p. 14.

German high command and lacked precise intelligence on the extent and state of German armaments. With the exception of the Americans, who were comparatively newcomers to the struggle but in whom, because of their lack of experience and training, the French and British military leaders had little confidence, the Allies wished to avoid the imposition of military and naval clauses so humiliating that Germany would prefer to continue the struggle. That the Allies, after 11 November 1918, added new and more onerous conditions on each occasion of the renewal of the Armistice terms may be attributed to the removal of their apprehensions in this regard as well as to the lack of considered judgment in the formulation of the original terms.[1] It is impossible, however, to estimate the extent to which this uncertainty regarding the future course of German action influenced, as an isolated factor, the formulation of the military terms. Fear of Germany's rejection of the Armistice was utilized by France and England to oppose each others' attempts to insert clauses which looked forward to the political terms of the peace rather than the more assurance of military superiority over the enemy. In the drafting of the Armistice terms, it was this political factor which exerted the greatest influence on the final result.

2. The Military Terms: With the exception of Japan, which took no part in the discussions, the views of none of the Allied powers on the military and naval terms of the Armistice to be presented to Germany were entirely dissociated from political considerations of the final peace settlement. The American military leaders, not only because their armies were fresh and rapidly increasing in size but also because they wished the imposition of military terms which would induce Germany to accept rational disarmament predicated on the eventual disarmament of all nations, stood out for armistice terms calling for the complete demobilization of the German armies. In the French view, German disarmament was a secondary consideration. In the formulation of the Armistice terms, as later in the peace terms, the French aimed at the separation of the left bank of the Rhine from Germany. This, together with certain guarantees by her Allies, was considered a much safer path to security than any restrictions on German

1. Successive renewals of the Armistice on 13 December 1918 and 16 January 1919 provided, among other things, for the destruction of partially completed submarines and reserved the right of the Allied High Command to extend their bridgeheads on the right bank of the Rhine.

armaments. The British emphasized armistice terms which would ensure the destruction of German sea power as a final condition of peace. To secure these naval aspirations, they were willing to make temporary compromises in purely military matters. The Italians were primarily interested in the armistice settlement with Austria. Their participation in the discussion of German armistice terms, therefore, was largely restricted to attempts to find compromises between opposing British and French forces.

The military terms of the Armistice were actually drawn up by the Allied field commanders whose views reflected the political interests of their respective countries. The program of Marshal Foch provided for (1) evacuation of France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine under time conditions which would make it impossible for the Germans to remove any large quantities of their war materials; (2) evacuation of the left bank of the Rhine under similar conditions and the occupation of that area by the Allies; (3) the surrender of a minimum quantity of heavy guns, field guns and machine guns; (4) the occupation of Mainz, Coblenz, and Cologne as bridgeheads on the right bank of the Rhine; (5) the establishment of a neutral zone, forty kilometers deep, on the right bank of the Rhine extending from the Swiss to the Dutch frontier. These terms of Marshal Foch clearly indicated the political character of the French views. With the exception of the qualitative features of disarmament contained in the clauses stipulating the surrender of a minimum quantity of armaments and the delivery of those materials which could not be removed from occupied zones within the established limits, the Foch plan made no provision for actual disarmament. The German armies were to be allowed to withdraw intact, retaining their carrying arms and such field armaments as they were able to evacuate. At the same time no provision was made for cessation in the manufacture of German war equipment.

The program of Marshal Foch was opposed in the conference of military commanders by Field Marshal Haig. No more than Foch, however, did Haig contemplate the destruction of German armed power. His opposition was based upon the necessity of avoiding humiliating conditions of peace that would restore the morale of the German armies at a time when

he believed that the brunt of further fighting would fall upon the English. Moreover, he discerned the political implications of the French plan which was aimed at securing possession of the Rhineland.[1] Haig, therefore, proposed only evacuation of France, Belgium and Alsace-Lorraine. General Pershing, who at first supported Foch, later reversed his position and demanded the continuance of the war until the Germans would agree to unconditional surrender. In this respect, his views approximated those of General Bliss, American military expert to the Supreme War Council, who desired the complete military disarmament of Germany, leaving only a small force for the preservation of order, and who, like Haig, disliked the political connotations of Foch's terms.[2] Foch rejected the recommendation of both Haig and American military representatives. His refusal to adopt any program for the complete or even partial quantitative or qualitative disarmament of Germany was due to several considerations, of which alleged technical difficulties in the enforcement of complete disarmament was perhaps the least important. Foch, first of all, desired French occupation of the left bank of the Rhine, a measure which would not be necessary in the view of his allies if Germany accepted terms providing for rapid and complete disarmament. Moreover, the French desired to maintain Allied armies in France at their full strength in order to impose the entire program of the peace. The complete demobilization of Germany would be followed by similar measures among the British and Americans with the result that French armies would be left alone to face any German recalcitrance arising in respect to the future peace.

It was the draft of Marshal Foch which was accepted by the Supreme War Council as the basis of their discussion and which, with but few changes, was incorporated into the terms of the Armistice actually submitted to Germany. Although Lloyd George and Colonel House, the American representative to the Surpeme War Council, voiced some protest against those recommendations which called for extensive occupation of German territory, they finally accepted Foch's argument that these conditions were necessary for the maintenance of military superiority during the period of peace negotiations. British acquiescence in the Foch program was probably due in large measure to the necessity of accepting a compromise in order to obtain French acceptance of the naval clauses of the Armistice terms.

1. Palmer, F. Bliss, Peacemaker, New York, 1934, p. 374.
2. Ibid.

3. Naval Terms: In the same way that the military clauses expressed the political aspirations of France, the naval clauses reflected the British desire to destroy German naval power. As originally drafted by the Inter-Allied Naval Council early in October, the projected naval clauses of the Armistice were extremely modest. In addition to demanding the cessation of submarine warfare, they provided (1) for the surrender of Helgoland to the Allied naval commander of the North Sea; (2) the concentration of all German surface ships and naval air forces in bases specified by the Allies; and (3) the surrender of sixty submarines. However, on Lloyd George's insistence that the Armistice should approximate the political conditions of the final peace settlement, the Inter-Allied Naval Council later formulated new terms which called for the surrender of a specified number of submarines, battleships, battle cruisers, and destroyers. This Inter-Allied naval program, which was essentially British, encountered the opposition of the French, who feared that these harsh naval terms would endanger acceptance of the military clauses. Foch argued that the German fleet, which had been reduced to inactivity during most of the war, did not constitute a danger to the Allied supremacy. As a counter proposal he made the recommendation that German surface vessels be confined to certain designated points in the Baltic while the Allies took Helgoland and Cuxhaven as guarantees. The French point of view was again based not so much on fear of the rejection of the Armistice as on opposition to any move which would permit appreciable demobilization of any section of Allied strength and therefore weaken the possibilities of enforcing the final conditions of peace on Germany. The American interest in the naval terms of the Armistice was restricted to the disposition of any war vessels secured from Germany. While the representatives of the United States apparently favored the seizure of the German fleet, it was only with the idea that it should be destroyed and not that it should be divided among the victorious nations. This naval issue was compromised only by replacing the demand for the surrender of German surface war vessels with a provision for their internment in an Allied or neutral port. Submarines, however, were to be surrendered.

4. Summary of Military-Naval Clauses: The military-naval clauses of disarmament which were finally submitted to Germany provided for the delivery intact of all military stores, munitions and equipment which could not be removed during the periods varying from fifteen to thirty-one days fixed for the evacuation of Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine, the left bank of the Rhine, and the neutral zone established on the right bank of the Rhine. In addition, the Germans were specifically required to surrender 5,000 guns, 25,000 machine guns, 3,000 trench mortars, and 1,700 airplanes. The naval clauses called for the immediate surrender of all German submarines and for the internment in neutral or Allied ports of six battle cruisers, ten battleships, eight light cruises, and fifty destroyers. All other surface warships, which were to be completely disarmed, were to be concentrated in German naval bases designated by the Allies. Although the naval terms provided for almost complete German disarmament, the military terms, because of French political considerations in which Britain and America acquiesced, had left the German armies intact. Only in regard to the naval clauses, therefore, can it be said that the Armistice reflected the future military conditions of peace. The temporary settlement as regards land armaments looked forward to French political ambitions in the Rhineland, and not to the future form of German armaments.

B. Disarmament Terms in the Treaty of Versailles, 1919

1. General Policy of the Allied Powers: In the period between German acceptance of the Armistice terms and the opening of the Paris Peace Conference, the attitude of the various powers towards German disarmament became more clearly defined. In the French program, disarmament continued to be a secondary consideration until plans for the definitive separation of the Rhineland from Germany and the control of German heavy industry in the Essen and Rhens-Westphalian district broke against Anglo-American opposition. Only at that time did the French begin to emphasize a more thorough-going disarmament program. Nevertheless, this emphasis on the purely military phases of German disarmament was still accomplished by attempts to further Rhineland ambitions. Great Britain, having secured

armistice terms which provided the basis for the annihilation of the German fleet, pursued a contradictory policy of military disarmament based upon domestic considerations, a desire to meet a limited version of the French point of view, and apprehension regarding the future spread of Russian Bolshevism. A policy of thorough-going German disarmament was dictated by the necessity of fulfilling campaign pledges for the immediate demobilization of the British army and by Irish difficulties which demanded the utilization of a large number of British troops that had to be withdrawn from Europe. At the same time, Britain was interested in preserving Germany as a bulwark against the westward march of Russian Communism. For this reason, Lloyd George tended to favor a moderate-sized German army. However, the later French demand for the reduction of enemy armed forces to an absolute minimum caused him to vacillate between his Bolshevik fears and his French sympathies.

The American program was fairly consistent, although it too was influenced by the fear of Bolshevism. Reduction of German armaments was sought within the framework of plans for a general and universal disarmament and with due consideration for the German need to preserve internal order against Communist agitation from within as well as without. Italy and Japan displayed little interest in the question of German disarmament, their attention being directed to territorial settlements quite outside of the German problem. Disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, then, were largely the result of compromises between conflicting Anglo-American and French views.

2. Military and Naval Disarmament at the Paris Conference: Political divergence on the question of military disarmament at the Paris conference centered around two points: (1) quantitative disarmament as it was applied to the form and size of the German army, and (2) the French attempt to secure qualitative disarmament through Allied occupation of the important areas of German armaments production. The difficulties relating to the size and form of the German army were occasioned by Lloyd George's January demand for the immediate reduction of German effectives in order that Britain might demobilize its own army. In response to

combined British and American action, the military experts attached to the Supreme War Council brought in recommendations that were to constitute the definitive military terms of the peace and which with the naval clauses, were to be submitted immediately to Germany.

Those military terms, which were dominated by Marshal Foch's ideas, provided for a German army of 200,000 men raised by conscription for a term of service of one year. Marshal Foch's views were predicated on a belief that a voluntary long-term army would create cadres which could easily be expanded to form the basis of a huge army. This phase of the program was attacked by Lloyd George, who flatly refused to accept conscription as the basis for a German peacetime army. Although his views were shaped largely by campaign promises made in England to abolish conscription, Lloyd George argued that conscripted armies renewed every year would result in the building up of potential German forces comprising millions of men. Although there is no substantiating evidence, it may well be that divergent French and British views were based on concepts far more political than technical. A German conscript army would have validated future French claims for maintaining Allied military controls in Germany, to which Lloyd George was unalterably opposed.

In this disagreement Lloyd George was supported by the American delegates who, in view of their attachment to universal disarmament, opposed a policy of German conscription. France, on the other hand, was supported by Italy and Japan, both of whom employed the conscription system in their own countries. Italian statesmen, in particular, feared that the abolition of conscription in Germany might give rise to an internal demand for similar action.[1] Nevertheless, Lloyd George's refusal to sign any peace treaty embodying the conscription principle compelled the dissidents to capitulate. As the price of her concession, however, France insisted on the reduction of the German army to 100,000 men, recruited voluntarily for a period of twelve year terms of service. Later on, when continued disorders on Germany's frontiers made America and Great Britain cognizant of the precarious position of Germany vis-a-vis the various succession states, upon whose armaments no restrictions were placed, an attempt was made to increase the German army to around 400,000 men. The French, however, vetoed this suggestion.

1. Baker, Ray S. Woodrow Wilson and the Peace Settlement, New York, 1922, I, 372.

The second major disarmament dispute of the Peace Conference was precipitated by French attempts to insure the qualitative disarmament of Germany by Allied occupation of German industrial areas east of the Rhine. This move came out of the Loucheur committee, originally established to formulate terms for the February renewal of the armistice. The report submitted by this committee recommended Allied military occupation of a triangle which would include Cologne, Essen, and the greater part of the Rheno-Westphalian coal district. This area was to be occupied as a pledge that Germany would not manufacture implements of war, at least during the period of the Armistice.[1] In reality the program was aimed at preparing the ground for a more extensive occupation, and German acquiescence was to be facilitated by stipulations allowing the maintenance of a German army of thirty divisions. A considerable number of heavy guns, field guns, and machine guns were to be allocated to this force, but all armaments over the amount specified were to be surrendered to the Allies. The Loucheur program was strongly attacked by Woodrow Wilson who termed it a "panic program." Wilson's views were based largely on a desire, shared by England, to avoid any move which might impede the recovery of German economic prosperity. His suggestion that the reduction of the German army be sought through negotiations with German commissioners on the quid pro quo basis of the reduction of the armies of occupation was vetoed, however, by both Lloyd George and the French. Nevertheless, Anglo-American opposition defeated the Loucheur plan and paved the way for the consideration of the military terms finally brought in by the Foch group.

The naval terms of disarmament occasioned difficulty among the Allies only as regards the disposition of the German fleet, interned by virtue of the Armistice terms at Scapa Flow. The question of disposition of the German fleet brought to the surface some suspicion on the part of the United States regarding British aims. Realizing that the removal of the German naval threat would have the effect of strengthening the Anglo-Japanese combination in the Far East, the American delegates were opposed to any division of German war vessels among the Allies which would

1. Miller, D.H. My Diary at the Paris Peace Conference, IV, 140-141.

further strengthen the Anglo-Japanese group.[1] The American delegates did not realize at the time, however, that Britain, too, was opposed to such a division, largely because of an unwillingness to contribute to the naval strength of France and Italy. The two latter countries, with Japan, were much in favor of the distribution program. France, in particular, argued that during the four war years her energies had been devoted to military armaments, with the result that unlike her allies, she had been unable to engage in the construction of capital ships. This issue was settled, however, not by negotiation but by the German action at Scapa Flow in which the major part of the Frand Fleet was sunk to avoid surrender. The few ships that were left were distributed among the victorious powers either for incorporation into their fleets or for destruction.

3. The Problem of the Duration of Inter-Allied Controls over Disarmament: The basic political conflict among the powers was most strikingly revealed, perhaps, in the question as to the time period during which Inter-Allied controls should be exercised over German disarmament. In the course of the discussions at Paris, the various commissions had established different time limits for the exercise of this control. The Aeronautical Commission envisaged the operation of its controls only through the Armistice period; the Naval Commission through the acceptance of the peace terms. The French-dominated Military Commission advocated permanent controls. The attempt to establish uniformity in this matter revealed a wide divergence of views. While the French maintained the demand for a permanent control, the English and Americans were unwilling to go beyond the period set for the carrying out of the disarmament clauses. Woodrow Wilson condemned any other arrangement as seeking "not peace but domination."[2] The British and American view was expressive of a consistent policy directed at the early restoration of Germany to the comity of nations, while the French attitude was quite in line with a security policy which demanded permanent control over German military organization and

1. Rudin, Harry R. Armistice, 1918, New Haven, 1944, pp. 302-305.
2. Miller, David H. op. cit., IV, 140-141.

potential. The question was never fully resolved at the peace conference. The life of the Inter-Allied Air, Naval, and Military Commissions was restricted to the period stipulated for the carrying out of the disarmament clauses. As a concession to the French, however, Article 213 was added, pledging Germany "to respond to any inquiry that the council of the League of Nations may deem necessary." Nevertheless, in the years immediately following the conclusion of the peace, French statesmen periodically put forth proposals for the establishment of some permament controls over German armaments.

4. Summary of the Peace Terms: The final terms of German military disarmament fixed the size of the army at 100,000 men recruited by voluntary enlistment for a period of twelve years. The arms and ammunition of the army were restricted both qualitatively and quantitatively and the manufacture of war materials was restricted to factories approved by the Allies. Certain weapons of offensive character such as tanks and armored cars were prohibited. The German General Staff was dissolved and its future reconstitution forbidden. The number of gendarmes and local police officials was to be increased only in proportion to the population increase since 1913. The German navy was restricted to six battleships, six light cruisers, and a few destroyers and torpedo boats. All submarines and military and naval aircraft were prohibited.

Time limits were established for the reduction of the German army to prescribed levels and for the surrender of all military equipment above the quantities specified in the peace clauses. The process of German disarmament was to be supervised by the various Inter-Allied commissions of control. Unfortunately for the future course of German disarmament a preamble was inserted in Part V of the treaty, which explained the disarmament clauses in terms of a projected general limitation in the armaments of all nations. This clause, inserted by the British and American delegations in order to make the treaty more palatable to the Germans has been widely interpreted as a moral obligation on the part of the Allies to reduce their own armaments or, failing this, to allow Germany at some future time equality of status. It was this clause which proved to be the instrument cited in support of German rearmament in 1933 following the failure of the Geneva disarmament conference.

Because they represented compromises between conflicting Anglo-American and French points of view, the disarmament clauses of the Treaty of Versailles satisfied none of the victorious powers. That France, which was the nation whose interests were most directly concerned, accepted them may be attributed to the concessions reluctantly granted on the Rhineland question, the matter of demilitarized zones, and Anglo-American guarantees of security. Occupation of the Rhineland by Allied troops for a period of fifteen years represented a compromise on the French demand for the permanent separation of that land from Germany. The establishment of a demilitarized zone extending fifty kilometers beyond the right bank of the Rhine was dictated by the same considerations. The final pillar in the French security edifice arranged at Paris was the Anglo-American guarantee of French security from German attack. The collapse of this pillar following the failure of the United States Senate to ratify the guarantee treaty shook the entire French security structure and constituted a fundamental factor in the difficulties of German disarmament enforcement in the immediate post-war years.

III. POLITICAL PROBLEMS IN ENFORCEMENT OF GERMAN DISARMAMENT

A. The Period of Active Enforcement, 1920-1927

1. Political Attitudes: The enforcement of German disarmament in the years immediately following the conclusion of the peace settlement was profoundly influenced by the failure of the United States to accept the Versailles Treaty and to ratify the American Treaty of Guarantee, an action which rendered inoperative the corollary Anglo-French agreement. Feeling herself deprived of the most effective instruments of security negotiated at Paris, France embarked upon a national program designed to secure her defense against a future German menace. The French program involved the building up of a chain of alliances with Belgium, Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia which not only encircled the German state but also gave France practical military domination of the European continent. At the same time France insisted throughout the greater part of the period on the rigid enforcement of the most minute details of the

disarmament clauses. Every infraction of those clauses was accompanied by a French demand for the execution of sanctions, usually in the form of an extension of the occupied zone. The uncompromising French policy in the matter of German disarmament persisted until the fiasco of the French occupation of the Ruhr in 1923 and 1924 produced a more conciliatory attitude which found expression in the Locarno pacts and brought an end to the tension not only in Franco-German but also in Anglo-French relations.

In contrast to the French attitude, British policy in this period indicated a desire to conciliate Germany. Britain hopes that this conciliation would be accompanied by a settlement of Franco-German difficulties. The British attitude was based on several considerations. Continued fear of Bolshevism made England, on the whole, more sympathetic than France to German requests for the maintenance of more extensive armaments than provided by the Versailles Treaty. This attitude was much more pronounced due to a growing opinion in Labor and Liberal circles that the disarmament clauses of the treaty constituted a marked injustice to Germany. Moreover, Britain desired the restoration of German economic prosperity, which was deemed essential to the reconstruction of British trade and industry. Hence British statesmanship was opposed to any armed intervention in German affairs which disrupted the orderly development of that country. Finally, it appears that the British attitude in the German disarmament problem was influenced by balance of power considerations. The British came to realize during this period that the restrictions placed upon German armaments delivered Europe to the military domination of France. It was the opinion of Viscount D'Abernon, English ambassador to Germany, that the French position on the Continent constituted a "disbalance" of power. Although expressing a desire for the maintenance of the Anglo-French entente, he was compelled he said to recognize the need for a strong Germany.[1] The opinions of D'Abernon were shared by Lord Curzon, British foreign secretary, who saw the goal of the chauvinism expressed in French public opinion as the military dictatorship of Europe,

1. Viscount D'Abernon, The Diary of an Ambassador, New York, 1929-1931, II, 255.

to be achieved through the mastery of the coal, iron, and steel industried of Lorraine, the Saar, and the Ruhr.[1] This British concern for the achievement of a balance of power arrangement was intensified by Britain's dependence on France for an uncertain military support in other areas, particularly in the Near East where French withdrawal from Turkey in 1922 compromised the British position.[2] The general tension which developed between the two countries on varied Continental problems during this period was reflected in the problem of the enforcement of German disarmament, and contributed to their misunderstanding in this matter.

For reasons which were somewhat similar to those of Britain, tension between Italy and France likewise developed in this period and influenced the enforcement of German armament restrictions. Italy feared the military hegemony of France in Europe and was particularly resentful of French support to Yugoslavia, with whom Italy was at odds during the greater part of this period. Moreover, Italy became involved in a struggle for naval parity with France in the Mediterranean Sea, which inclined her to take an anti-French view in other problems. Even more important, Italy felt herself to be among the "outlaws" in the Versailles peace settlement because of the failure of the Allies to satisfy her Adriatic and colonial ambitions. Italy, therefore, was far more sympathetic than even the British toward Germany. Her policy was, therefore, inclined to follow the British lead in opposing extreme French attitudes on disarmament questions.

2. Political Conflict in Disarmament Enforcement: As provided by the Versailles Treaty, the supervision of German disarmament was entrusted to three Inter-Allied commissions of control, one each for air, naval, and military disarmament. These commissions, in turn, were supervised by the Conference of Ambassadors, which had its seat at Paris and which was entrusted with the solution of all policy matters in connection with the work of the various commissions of control. The importance of the Conference of Ambassadors in this respect has probably been exaggerated. Although documentary evidence on the disarmament phases of the work of

1. Lord Ronaldshay: Life of Lord Curzon, New York, 1928, III, 272.
2. Viscount D'Abernon, op. cit., II, 178.

the Conference is still lacking, it appears that the fundamental problems connected with the enforcement of German disarmament were settled by the periodic conferences of the prime ministers and foreign secretaries of the various Allied powers.

While the work of the air and naval commissions of control was completed comparatively early and these bodies were withdrawn from Germany, that of the military commission, designed to last only for a few months, was actually prolonged until January 1927. The long life of the military commission was due to the failure of Germany to comply with the military clauses of disarmement. This failure of Germany to fulfill the peace terms within reasonable time limits was utilized by the French as an excuse for demanding extension of controls. The British attempt to restrain their ally, through considerations equally selfish, constituted the crux of the political problem in the enforcement of German disarmament.

A detailed examination of the Anglo-French conflict in the German disarmament problem is unnecessary here. The first open break came in 1920 when the German government, in its efforts to put down the Kapp Putsch, sent troops into the neutralized zone of the right bank of the Rhine in violation of treaty provisions. France, without consulting her allies, responded by occupying Frankfort, Darmstadt, and other localities on the right bank of the Rhine. Great Britain, in dissociating herself from this action, threatened to withdraw Lord Derby from the Council of Ambassadors if the situation were not immediately regularized. Because of her allinace with France and, perhaps, because her interests demanded protection from any French action which might result in permanent changes in the Rhineland area, Belgium supported France. Italy, however, followed the English lead and refused to take part. Although the United States was not represented in the Council of Ambassadors, the American government let it be known that it did not favor any extension of Allied occupation in Germany. Although this breach between England and France was rapidly healed, the spectacle of division among the Allied powers undoubtedly encouraged German obstinacy in the fulfillment of the peace terms. Probably as a result of this unilateral action, however, the British adopted

a policy aimed at restricting the authority of the French-dominated Inter-Allied Military Commission as a means of preventing the recurrence of such incidents and also as a means of relieving the German government of a great part of the annoyance which accompanied the operation of these controls. In 1921, on Curzon's suggestion, the Military Commission was forbidden to draw any problem of a political character to the attention of the German government without the consent of the Conference of Ambassadors.[1] Later, in 1923, the chiefs of the individual Allied delegations to the Commission were instructed to maintain contact with their various diplomatic delegates at Berlin. Finally, the regulation was laid down that any decision of the Commission to be executed without the consent of the Conference of Ambassadors had to be accepted unanimously by the chiefs of the Allied delegations.

Again in 1923 French action threatened to disrupt harmony in the Military Control Commission, although the causative factor was not associated with enforcement of disarmament. In that year France demanded that Great Britain and the other Allies join her in taking military sanctions against Germany because of the return of the Crown Prince. France threatened that if the Allies refused to join her, she would reserve the right to proceed with an independent application of sanctions. On instructions of his government, Lord Crewe, the British ambassador to Paris, notified the Conference that he would withdraw if France acted independently and that the British representatives would be withdrawn from all Inter-Allied bodies, including the Military Control Commission. The Italian ambassador took the same line as his British colleague with the result that France was compelled to withdraw her demands.

The occupation of the Ruhr by France and Belgium as the result of German failures in reparations deliveries likewise had important implications for the enforcement of German disarmament. During this period inspections by the Military Controls Commission practically came to a standstill. The French and Belgian action again served to underline the divergence which existed among the Allied powers, since Great Britain and Italy refused to take part in the occupation. The Italian ambassador in Berlin stated more or less openly that the great blunder of the peace

1. Nollet, Charles M. E. Une Experience de Desarmement, pp. 28-30.

conference was to have disarmed Germany without similarly disarming France.[1] Lond D'Abernon too condemned the French action as designed primarily to achieve French Rhineland ambitions. This further divergence among the Allies offered additional encouragement to German evasion of disarmament restrictions.

Despite recurrent friction between the British and French political attitudes as regards the enforcement of disarmament, English dependence on France for support in other European and world areas, and the necessity of France to take British views into consideration because of her security problem, led the two countries to collaborate to the point where the enforcement of German disarmament eventually came to approximate the standards set up in the Versailles Treaty. The failure of the Ruhr occupation had the affect of tempering the French attitude toward Germany and was a considerable factor in the creation of the Locarno atmosphere. As a result, the Military Controls Commission was able to wind up its work in January 1927, shortly after the entrance of Germany into the League of Nations. Nevertheless, the French persisted in their attempts inaugurated in 1922 to secure the setting up of a permanent control commission depending upon the League of Nations. Because of the opposition of Great Britain and Germany, which now occupied a permanent seat on the Council of the League, the French proposals, put forward again in 1927 failed to secure acceptance.

B. The Process of German Rearmament

The withdrawal of the Inter-Allied Military Commission from Germany in 1927, following the entrance of Germany into the League of Nations as a great power, marked the end of the active enforcement of German disarmament. From this time on it was no longer a problem of German disarmament but one of equality of status, to be achieved either through a universal reduction of armaments to the level of Germany or the rearmament of that country to the level of the other great powers.

For the purpose of this paper it is not necessary to go deeply into the details of this period which marked the beginnings of the German diplomatic struggle for rearmament. Along with the recognition of Germany's

1. Viscount D'Abernon, op. cit., II, 279.

great power status as exemplified by her entrance into the League with a permanent seat on the Council, the partial restoration of a diplomatic balance of power on the European Continent goes far toward explaining the ability of Germany to escape the restrictive clauses of the Versailles Treaty.

The new balance of power first appeared around 1930 in the discussions of the Preliminary Commission for the Disarmament Conference where the German demand for the equality of status was first launched, it was created by the unified action of Germany, Italy, and Russia in opposing French efforts to make any revision of the disarmament clauses of the treaty dependent upon the establishment of a system of international security. All three of these powers had looked upon themselves as virtual outcasts in the new Europe almost since the signing of the Versailles Treaty. Communist Russia and defeated Germany had established close relations as early as 1922 when they had joined to sign the Treaty of Rapallo. The Russo-German friendship, although frequently disturbed by "diplomatic incidents," had survived down to 1930. Although in disappointed Italy a certain sympathy for her former enemy had existed since the early days of Treaty enforcement, it was not until 1928, when Mussolini first openly advocated treaty revision, that the more solid basis of collaboration was established. This friendship tended to increase in proportion to the development of anti-democratic power in Germany through such organizations as the Nazi Party and the para-military Stahlhelm organization, which the Duce began to cultivate in 1929. Russo-Italian cooperation was based on the commercial treaty of 1924, and the two powers, which were drawn together by their common opposition to the French "system of Europe," signalized their close friendship in 1930 when Litvinov met the Italian foreign secretary at Milan. In the last sessions of the Preliminary Commission for the Disarmament Conference and throughout the Geneva meetings which began in 1932, this unofficial diplomatic combination of Germany, Italy, and Russia successfully opposed France and her bloc of Eastern satellites in their attempts to secure the acceptance of a program which would have perpetuated French hegemony on the Continent and the status quo as established by the Versailles Treaty.

Great Britain, which again held the traditional balance in the division of the European states, adopted a policy which, in its net result, favored the German thesis rather than that of France. While consistently refusing to assume further commitments on the European Continent, Great Britain, following the initiative of Italy, secured the adhesion of France to the Four-Power agreement of 11 December 1932, in which Germany's right to equality of status was definitively recognized. The failure, however, of the Geveva Disarmament Conference to afford this equality of status resulted in the withdrawal of Germany and the assertion of her right to rearm. The bankruptcy of the disarmament terms of Versailles received official recognition in 1935 when England, to insure her naval position, signed a convention with Germany sanctioning a limited revival of German sea power. With her freedom to reconstruct land and air armaments unchallenged in practice, Germany took the road leading to the present war.

IV. CONCLUSION

A definitive estimate of the various factors which underlay the failure of this first experiment in German disarmament clearly lies outside the scope of this study. Such an estimate would have to take into consideration, first of all, the question as to whether or not the disarmament imposed on Germany was sufficiently embracing to remove that country as a menace to European and world peace. In view of the conflicting political interests which motivated the victorious powers in their formulation and enforcement of the disarmament terms, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that however complete the Allies might have envisaged disarmament in 1919, their disunity on the problem eventually would have enabled Germany to nullify the restriction placed upon her freedom to arm.

With the exception of France, the Allied nations were not as convinced in 1918 and 1919 as in previous war years that Germany was the arch criminal of Europe. The spectre of Bolshevism had contributed largely to the weakening of such a conviction. This fact, together with considerations of Germany's role in the reconstruction of European economy, the Wilsonian idea that Germany could be redeemed after a "generation of

thoughtfulness," and reluctance to replace German domination with that of France, led England and America to oppose the more thorough-going program of France, which was based on territorial dismemberment and rigid economic controls.

In the immediate post-war years the effectiveness of even the limited disarmament program finally adopted was partially vitiated by the continued conflict in political aims between Great Britain, which wished to see a Germany economically prosperous and militarily fortified against the dangers of Communist and Rightist revolution, and France, which saw her own and European security linked to the perpetuation of German military weakness, and whose views on German economic prosperity were based on the contradictory theory of reparations. After 1927, when German "redemption" was signalized by the entrance of the ex-enemy nation into the League of Nations as a great power, it was virtually impossible to deny over a period of years the German right to equality of status. The unchallenged assertion of this equality in 1933 was made possible by the political conflicts which had witnessed the resurrection of a diplomatic balance of power between France and her satellites on the one hand and the Italo-German-Russian combination on the other. Great Britain, which held the balance and which might have stemmed the movement toward rearmament, in line with her previous policy of conciliating Germany, elected to recognize the German action by measures calculated to safeguard her own naval position.

The lesson to be derived from this analysis of the political factor in the failure of the first experiment in German disarmament is clear. The permament enforcement of a disarmament program requires the assurance of continued concerted action among the victorious powers in order to prevent the rebirth of balance of power arrangements from which Germany would be able to profit.